

EYRE

John Charles

Service No: 153



Courtesy State Library of W.A.

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: John Charles Eyre

Service number: 153

Date of enlistment: 6/10/1914

Age at Enlistment: 22 years 1 month

Civil Occupation: Farmer

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal, 1914/15 Star

Height: 5 Ft 7 ½ inches

Weight: 140 Lbs.

Chest measurement: 34 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Brown

Father: Robert Henry Eyre

Mother: Charlotte Boyle

Siblings: Henry (1863-1863), Robert Edward (1864), Elizabeth (c.1866-1869), Thomas William (1876-1935), Henry (1879-1950), Lizzie (1880), Alice (1882-1956), Margaret Mary/Molly (1884), Helena (1887), William (1889), Etta (1893-1911) and Hilda May (1896).

Family History

Robert Henry Eyre was born in Ireland in 1836. Initially employed as a clerk, he was sentenced to Life in 1856 for attempted assault and robbery and transported to Western Australia on the *Lord Raglan* which arrived in June 1858.

At some point, he met Mary Jane Molyneux, who had arrived in Western Australia in December 1860 on the *Escort*. She became his de facto partner and they had three children, Henry, Robert and Elizabeth.

Robert obtained his Ticket of Leave in 1860 and, for most of the 1860s, he lived and worked around Perth, Guildford and Fremantle. Robert was briefly in York towards the end of 1861 but, probably due to being charged with horse stealing, he was soon back in Perth.

Moved from one employer to another, Robert found it difficult to stay out of trouble and, over the next few years, he was charged with various offences, ranging from being out after hours to assault. In 1866, Robert was charged with forwarding an offensive parcel to Government House using paper stolen from the Government. In the same year, he absconded from North Fremantle and was sentenced to two years' hard labour with three months in irons. He also received another three-year sentence for forgery.

In 1868 and 1869, Robert worked as a clerk in York before becoming a tutor to the children of Samuel Craig. Perhaps he was having difficulty putting aside bad habits because this position did not last, and Robert was soon reduced to the role of labourer.

In 1874, Robert was assigned to J.T. Parker at “Marley” farm near York. He finally received a Conditional Pardon in January 1875 and, around this same time, began a relationship with Charlotte Boyle. The couple went on to have ten children. Their first child was born in 1879 at Goomalling, where Robert was working for Robert Scott. Thomas William was the first born in York.

It seems that family life did not reform Robert. In 1881, he was charged with stealing “sundry cheques and other monies” from the bedroom of Thomas Davey at the Settlers Arms in Beverley. In the same year, he and his son (also known as Robert) were charged with horse stealing and receiving. Although found not guilty on this occasion, Robert was committed to trial in 1884 for stealing a black mare belonging to George Willey. He was acquitted on a similar charge on 1887.

Robert died in 1898. Strangely, despite his apparent behaviour, he was noted in the local paper to be someone who possessed a “genial disposition” and who, with his “extraordinary knowledge of law and equity... assisted many with advice, gratuitously”. Perhaps Robert used his personal experiences to advise others in a similar position.

Life Story

John Charles was born in York in 1891, the son of Robert and Charlotte. Little is known of his early life, though he was known to be a member of the Bally Bally Cricket Club in 1910, when he was presented with a bat for having the best batting average that year.

John enlisted early, signing up as a trooper with the 10th Light Horse on the 6th October 1914. In February 1915, he embarked from Fremantle on the A47 *Mashobra*, bound for Egypt, before finally sailing from Alexandria to the Gallipoli Peninsula on the 16th May 1915.

Along with many others from the 10th Light Horse, John was Killed in Action at Walkers' Ridge on the 7th August 1915, a mere three months after his arrival. This was the date of the Battle of the Nek, part of the August Offensive, and the site of the charge of the Light Horse, one of the Regiment's most famous actions. The 10th Light Horse suffered 138 casualties, eighty of which were fatal. John Charles was buried at Point Cemetery, Ari Burnu, on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Walkers Ridge, Gallipoli, after the Charge of the Light Horse
Courtesy Australian War Memorial

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